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ABSTRACT

The decentralization of educational administration has been undertaken as a major reform effort in the Republic of Korea (South Korea). Current efforts at decentralization are only the most recent of numerous attempts to reduce what many observers agree is an excessive centralization of the nation's statewide administration for public affairs and educational administration. In addition to these efforts, the role of local planning and management in every sector is increasing with an utilization of new technologies in local administration for public affairs and educational administration. This paper attempts to contribute to the improvement of the quality of local education and provision of effective regional planning in Korea considering the peoples' demands for autonomy and decentralization in every sector. The paper begins with the concept of educational administration and planning and follows with a discussion of the conceptual model of the local governance system of educational administration in Korea. Finally, the paper suggests policy measures for decentralization of education administration and strengthening of local educational planning based on future prospects of changes in educational administration. (Author/DB)

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## DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND STRENGTHENING OF LOCAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Dr. CHUNG, IL-HWAN

MEXICO
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# Decentralization of Educational Administration and Strengthening of Local Educational Planning in Republic of Korea

by

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A Paper for the International Congress "Planning and Management of Educational Development" in Mexico, March, 1990

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## I. Introduction

Decentralization in educational administration has been instituted as a reform effort aimed at accomplishing devolution in current Korean society. In Korea, major political and educational system reform efforts are underway on the local level basis. Current efforts at decentralization in Korea are only the most recent of numerous attempts to reduce what many observers agree is the excessive centralization of the nation's statewide administration for public affairs and educational administration. Addition to these efforts, the role of local planning and management in every sector is increasing with an utilization of new technologies in local administration for public affairs and educational administration.

At this point, it seems useful to diagnose the current status and problems of and suggest some policy alternatives to accomplish decentralization in educational administration and strengthening of the regional planning in Korea. This paper attempts to contribute to improvement of the quality of local education and provision of effective regional planning in Korea considering the peoples' demands for autonomy and decentralization in every sectors. The following review begins with the concept of the educational administration and planning followed by a discussion of the conceptual model of the local governance system of educational administration in Korea. Finally, the paper suggests policy measures for decentralization of educational administration and strengthening of local educational planning based on future prospects of changes in educational administration.

## II. Conceptual Framework for Decentralization in Educational Administration

In general, educational administration is defined as a systematic effort to provide condition and support for the achievement of educational goals considering the characteristics of the local units. The role or function of educational administration is to assist schools to perform educational goals effectively in various ways.

The principle of educational administration is that the creativity and self-reliance of each school should be respected. Control and direction imposed from the top down undermines the diversity and school autonomy. Amid the mounting outcry for local governance in education, the emphasis of regional educational planning and school centered operation is increasing.

Decentralization is an antonym to centralization, which indicates the position of power on the spectrum toward administration units an local levels. It may be considered in two ways. One connotes administrative terms, which mean

the division of power to several units, whereby one is checked by and balanced with others. On the other side, it means the shift of power gravity toward local administration units. Decentralization in educational administration involves redistribution units, with the resultant alternation of vertical and horizontal relations among them and the increased latitude of self-governing on the local levels.

In parallel with the decentralization in educational administration, the criteria for local governance system in education can be i) decentralization of power, ii) democratization of decision-making, iii) professionalization of administrative personnel, and iv) rationalization of school financing (Figure 1).

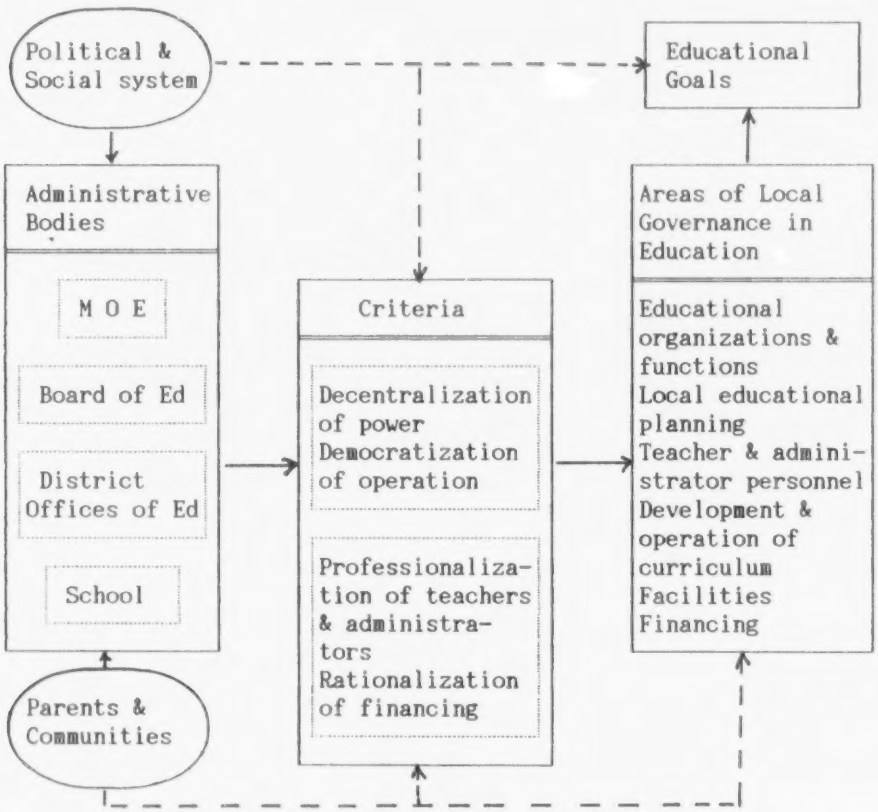


Figure 1. Criteria for Local Governance System in Educational Administration

Local or regional educational planning has to do with the sociogeographical context. As education systems expanded, centralized administrative systems

became congested and distant from users. This increased interest in decentralization of educational administration and local educational planning. Advantages of decentralization and regionalization (localization) include increased recognition of cultures and local needs, more equal access to education, more participation in local education planning by professionals and lay people.

## III. Current Status and Problems of Educational Administration in Korea

### 1. Current Status of Educational Administration in Korea

This section describes the present status and problems of organizations and operations of educational administration in Korea. The bodies responsible for educational administration consist of three layers; the Ministry of Education on the central level, the boards of education in province and the offices of education on the county level.

#### A. Central Organization

The central organization of educational administration is the Ministry of Education. But it is not that the Ministry of Education is exclusively responsible for education to the virtual exclusion of other organizations. In a broader sense, the central organizations include the Presidential Office and the Prime Ministr's Office.

Article 29 of Government Organization Law defines the Ministry's functions, inter alia, i) to administer matters pertaining to education, science, and physical education, ii) to compile and authorize textbooks, and iii) to support and supervise administrative and financial aspects of all local education administrative organizations. The Minister of Education, as a member of the Cabinet, formulates educational policies, makes decisions regarding major issues of education, enacts provisions needed for the implementation of policies, supervises and controls its subordinate organizations.

#### B. Local Educational Administration

The local educational administrative bodies are responsible for the administration of matters pertaining to elementary and secondary education, which reflects the local needs of education. For the administration of local education, they lay out a regional plan of educational development, intake a broad base of opinions, and make informed decisions based on the opinions. Administrative support and supervisory guidance are, therefore, the major responsibilities of local administrative bodies.

Among the local autonomous bodies responsible for educational administration, the board of education exists in each province or special city of its equivalent. The office of education in each county represents the lowest body of educatioal administration.

2. Obstacles to Local Governance in Educational Administration

The foremost obstacle to local governance in educational administration is the centralized authority to not only formulate policies but deal with operational and technical matters.

Second, the lack of professional competency on the part of administrative personnel is another barrier to the local governance in educational administration. The administrators who lack in the knowledge of planning, curriculum, instruction and guidance are not expected to provide support relevant to educational needs inherent in the school.

Third, supervision and audit by the administrative authorities are control-oriented and intent on finding fault with the schools rather than inclined to help them resolve planning constraints and instructional problems in a professional capacity. Its reliance on written inquires and orders haunts schools into reporting, thus causing a lot of administrative chores. The fact that supervision and audit is a liability rather than a blessing impedes the school autonomy.

Fourth, parents and the public lack the understanding of local education, namely, what the school is doing and is concerned about. Very often, their mistaken view toward school education misguides their uncontroiled passion for education into pressure and intervention, with the resultant damage done to the school autonomy.

Finally, in organizational and functional aspects, the subject of educational planning in local administrative units is unclear and the infrastructure of educational planning is dual and weak. In addition, the local administrative units are unable to function for educational planning because of lack of experts in this area. In the process and operation of educational planning, the problems are the lack of communications within and between educational administrative bodies. For example, within the organization educational administrators express themselves as poor dissemination of information, either up and down or lateraly in the organization. Another different example of poor internal communication is in the diffusion of innovations. Many educational settings do not achieve systematic excellence throughout their organization because effective or modern administrative manaagement techniques are poorly disseminated.

A second kind of communication problems has to do with communication across

organizational boundaries. For example, the provincial board of education, the county office of education, parents, students, and teachers, may each have sharply divergent views of the goals of the school district or its problems. These political problems directly affect the feasibility of and support for various educational planning.

3. Future Prospects of Change in Educational Administration

The changes in educational systems in Korea are so inadequate as the local governance system in educational administration and planning economic, political and technological changes. Therefore, this section discusses how the educational administration system would change in relation to the forthcoming implementation of local governance system in education.

The functional relationship between the central and the local administrative authorities is determined by addressing the question of "to what extent the former is willing to delegate its functions and allow the latter to be self-reliant and flexible about issues which influence local education?" This assertion directs attention to what follows:

First, the method of local people's participation in decision-making accounts for the degree of their influence on local administration. For instance, the local people allowed to select their representatives to local assembly may be less influential than those allowed to elect the heads of local autonomous bodies besides the representatives.

Second, the autonomy of educational administration will be influenced by how the local assembly is related with local autonomous bodies. The integration of parliamentary functions with executive functions will produce and entirely different pattern of educational administration from the one expected of the relation that separates the former from the latter.

Third, the status of local administrative personnel and the style of personnel management are also influential variables for the local governance of educational administration. The percentage of central government officials vs. local officials, the authority to employ, promote and transfer personnel, salary level and working conditions deserve as much attention for their profound impact on the realization of local governance.

Fourth, the degree of self-sufficiency in educational financing also indicates the feasibility of local governance in education. On the other hand, the greater the dependence on the central government in financing local education, the longer it takes to realize local governance in education.

## IV. Policy Directions and Measures for Decentralization in Educational Administration and Strergthening of Local Educational Planning

### 1. Organizational Structure and Power Distribution

#### A. Streamlining of Organizational Structure

According to the realignment of functions between different levels of administrative authorities, organizational structures should be streamlined so as to assume new functions and delete some of old ones. The Ministry of Education is responsible for policy fromulation, educational planning and coordination; the provincial board of education for regional planning and supervision, and the county office of education for supporting schools in fulfilling educational functions suited to local needs.

To strengthen its function in policy development, the Ministry of Education should create the Office of Policy Deliberation and reinforce the Office of Planning and Management and the Office of Supervison and Textbook Compilation. At the same time, efforts should be made to provide functional specialization by incorporating into these offices similar or overlapped functions.

The provincial board of education should promote the present status of planning and inspection officer to the Office of Educational Planning and Coordination responsible for regional planning of education, policy formulation, coordination and control. The Office of Supervision needs to be created to strengthen its role in promoting advices, guidance and research related to instruction.

At the county office of education, Division of Supervision be created, as a staff organization, to be exclusively responsible for supporting schools. Cognizant of the importance of local uniqueness in education, thought should be given to integrating two or three districts into one, and this will make it possible to staff the division of supervision with supervisors representing all subject matters.

#### B. Delegation of Functions

The redistribution of administrative authority can be initiated by delegating some of the Ministry of Education's functions to the provincial boards of education, followed by the delegation of functions from the provincial board of education to the county office of education.

2. Operation and Procedure of Educational Administration

A. More Opportunities for Participation

The democratic principle of educational administration reflects concern for enlarging the opportunity to participate in decision-making and ensuring that constructive inputs from the concerned people have a bearing on dicisions. In operational terms, it suggests the desirability of providing alternative processes of implementation and maintaining a free cooperative climate where the concerned people have a free choice of alternatives evolved from their participation in decision-making.

The process of decision-making involves not only the members of the concerned organization but those of the implementing agency in a collaborative attempt that is coordinated through committees. Down at the school level, a committee is formed, consisting of teachers, students, parents and the community representatives. Democratic administration has a great dependence on various committees intended to enlarge the opportunity for constructive inputs to be reflected in decision-making.

B. Little Control and Direction

Uniformed control and direction from the higher administrative authorities increases the dependence of the lower authorities, which is a major barrier to the local governance of educational administration. While the former is responsible for the formulation of basic policies, it should encourage the latter to initiate creative action for a greater outcome of education, conscious of making school accountable to the community. The local administrative authorities should be selective about control and direction in consideration of variables influencing schools.

3. Administrative Personnel

A. Professionalization of Administrative Personnel

The present system of training educational administrators is far from equipping them with the professional competencies of an effective administrator, viable in the seething, turbulent society. It calls for a massive reform of the present system, not only in organizational structure but contents and methods. Management by objectives will be a valuable addition to the present curriculum.

An alternative to the present system may be to install a course of educational administator within the teacher training institutes, the completion of which leads to advanced degrees. Eligibility for admission should be based

on the years of teaching or serving as a school administrator, not by credentials showing the level of educational attainment.

Curriculum should reflect heavier weights given to fundamental courses, curriculum theories, and action-oriented research. The point of emphasis here is how to ensure an effective linkage with the practicalities of school and classroom amid the diversity of courses.

B. Training of Supervisors

Despite the fact that supervision requires a high degree of professionality, there is no system which prepares or trains supervisors. Therefore, the experienced teachers, when promted to supervisors, are allowed to perform supervisory functions exposure to an intermediate training course.

A training program should be created as an attachment to graduate studies or to the existing teacher training system, with the purpose of providing a highly tailored program to meet the educational needs of supervisors. The trainees will be qualified for supervisors upon the completion of the training. An essential parallel to it is in-service training to keep supervisors updated on new frontiers of theory and skills. Since supervisors help teachers with instruction and guidance, it is imperative that they keep themselves ahead of the teacher by having a ready exposure to new theories of cururriculum and teaching method, and deep understanding of regional characteristics. It is necessary, therefore, to make an institutional arrangement that makes it mandatory for supervisors to receive a certain amount of in-service training per year. The center piece of training program should include curriculum and instruction-related contents as well as educational planning. The supervisor's role requires them to be expert in local and school education planning.

4. Educational Financing

To finance the implementation of the local governance system in education requires a cost increase in educational investment. The percentage of MOE budget to GNP should increase in the future. In budgeting and allocating resources, education should be given higher priority in competition with other sectors of the economy and a scheme should be evolved to inspire the contribution of the private sector to education. Reactivating the PTA, flexibility in determining tuition fees, and encouraging donations from the private sector are some of measures compelling consideration.

The Ministry of Education should liberalize its control on the special account of local education financing. Particularly, the authority to reallocate funds for compulsory education should be delegated to the provincial board of education. With regard to the budget for middle schools, the local authorities

should be allowed to report on the result of funding instead of having to obtain approval from the higher authorities before funding. At the same time, legal provisions and regulations should be amended to enlarge the local authorities' latitude of discretion in budgeting for and financing local education. Budget planning for secondary education, subsidy for private middle schools, assistance to balance the revenues of schools and control on the financial management of primary and middle schools should be delegated to the county office of education.

5. Local Educational Planning

For activation of local (regional) educational planning, the local governance system in educational admininstration should be set up legally and institutionally, the finance for local education should be sufficiently secured, and local educational administrator's and community peoples' attitude toward local education should be changed.

The role of teachers in the local educational planning process must be emphasized. The issue is the extent to which administrators should make efforts to engage teachers actively in planning school improvement efforts. Therefore, the local educational planning should be activated toward following directions: less intervene in local educational activities from central government, independence from administration for public affairs, democratic operation in local educational planning process, and training and recruitments of educational planning experts, finally, an emphasis of accountability and assessment in local educational planning.

On the other hand, it is urgent to develop and adopt a planning and budgeting model for local education agencies in order to better manage the education systems and to ensure an optimal use of the human and financial resources available for education. For example, LPBM (Local Planning and Budgeting Model) which developed by Brackett, J. et al. (1983) can be adopted for the development of the local education in Korea. The specific LPBM is shown in Figure 2.

According to them, the models can be applied to assist local school districts in planning by projecting resource requirements. The models may allow policy makers to trace the effects of changes in total enrollments, enrollment composition with respect to local educational needs, school size, legislative or administrative mandates for sevvices, and state budget cutbacks on total and per pupil program costs, total and per pupil resource requirements, and the composition of program and curricular offerings.

Finally, it is necessary to make certain an adequate data base system (for example, spreadsheets, database management, and graphics) availble for formulating local educational planning. This information should be of two

types: i) essential information about the regional situations (population, economic, social and cultural contexts) and ii) critical data that will enable local educational planners to prepare plans.

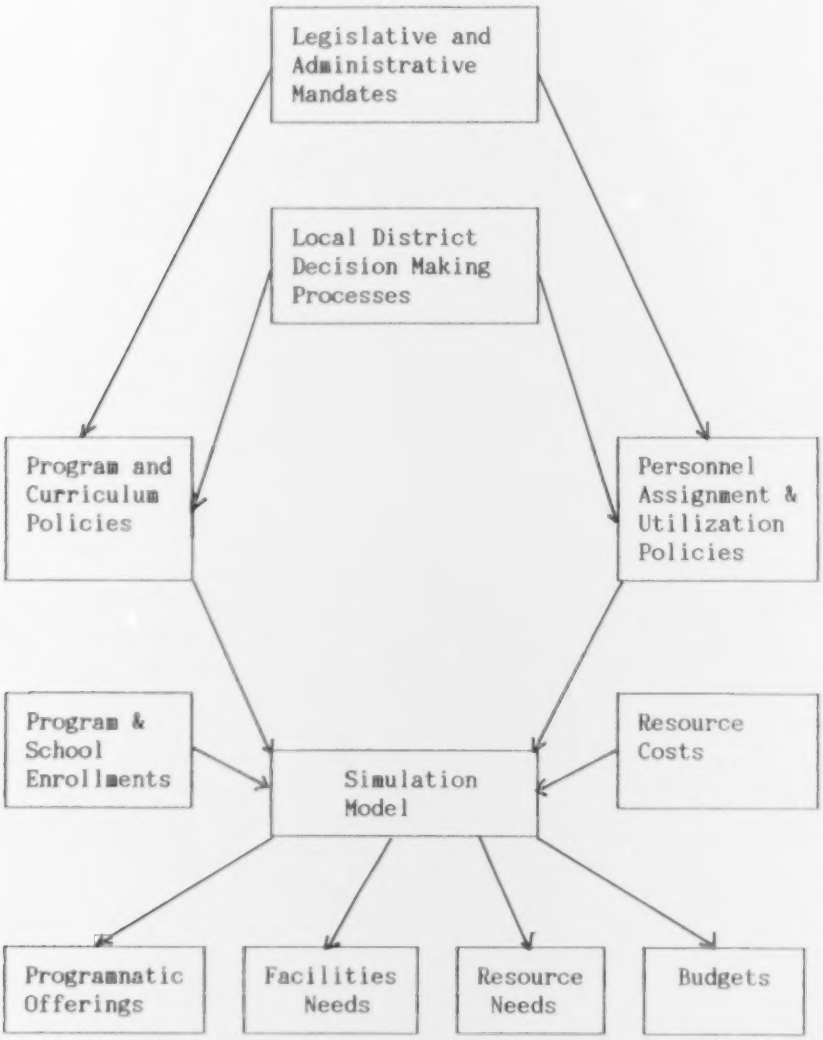


Figure 2. Planning Model for Local School Disticts

Source: Brackett, J. et al.(1983) The Legacy of Rational Budgeting Models in Education and a Proposal for the Future, Stanford University, p.8.

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